

# Prayer Service for the Care of Creation

Use this service to celebrate the **World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation** on 1st September.

It can also be used at any point during the Season of Creation – an ecumenical season dedicated to prayer and action on the protection of creation, running from 1st September to 4th October (the feast of St Francis of Assisi).

Pope Francis has called us all to *“reaffirm [our] personal vocation to be stewards of creation, to thank God for the wonderful handiwork that he has entrusted to our care, and to implore his help for the protection of creation, as well as his pardon for the sins committed against the world in which we live.”*

**Preparation for the liturgy:** Print some copies of the images below, or project them onto a screen in the Parish. Or, you can pray this liturgy outdoors.

## Opening hymn

*O Lord, my God, when I in awesome wonder* (Laudate 721)

## Words of welcome and opening prayer

**Leader:** (*Makes the sign of the cross*) We gather today in thanksgiving for the glorious gift of creation, and we ask for the Lord’s help to care for our world.

Let us pray:

Loving God,  
Creator of heaven, earth and all things.  
Open our minds and touch our hearts,  
So that we can work to care for Creation, your gift.  
Be present to those, especially the poorest and most vulnerable.  
Help us to show solidarity as we confront the injustices in the world.  
Make us courageous in embracing the changes needed to work for justice.  
Help us to listen and respond to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.  
We pray through Christ our Lord,

**All: Amen.**

## Call of repentance

**Leader:** From the rising sun to the smallest of creatures, all of the earth is good. Yet, we see how our fragile world is being robbed by the hand of greed. In many countries, water is no longer safe to drink. The rainforests are cut down and lives destroyed, all in the interests of money and power.

**Reader one:** SCIAF have been working with communities in Colombia to help protect their environment, their livelihoods and their human rights. For communities living along the River Atrato, 'the river is life'. The river plays a central role in the cultural, economic and social life of the community there. However illegal mining, deforestation and Colombia's long-running internal conflict have caused devastating damage in the region. Climate change has further exacerbated the problems, with the normally wet region experiencing several droughts in recent years. This has led to water shortages, fish supplies dwindling and transport becoming more difficult. The community have shown great courage speaking out in the face of danger and uncertainty. SCIAF partners are working to protect the river, support livelihoods and ensure food security for the river communities. We are all called by God to protect the people and the planet. It is our global responsibility to care for our neighbours around the world.

**Reader two:** In his encyclical letter *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis reflects on the cry of the earth. "Sister earth, along with all the abandoned of our world, [cries] out pleading that we take another course. Never have we so hurt and mistreated our common home as we have in the last two hundred years. Yet we are called to be instruments of God our Father, so that our planet might be what he desired when he created it and correspond with his plan for peace, beauty and fullness."

**Leader:** We recognise our part in harming the Earth and our neighbours, and we ask for the Lord's forgiveness. In the silence of our hearts, let us reflect on how to change our lives and care for God's wonderful gift of creation.

## Silent reflection

**Hymn:** *O, the love of my Lord* (Laudate 967)

**First reading:** *Laudato Si'*, paragraph 228

Care for nature is part of a lifestyle which includes the capacity for living together and communion. Jesus reminded us that we have God as our common Father and that this makes us brothers and sisters. Fraternal love can only be gratuitous; it can never be a means of repaying others for what they have done or will do for us. That is why it is possible to love our enemies. This same gratuitousness inspires us to love and accept the wind, the sun and the clouds, even though we cannot control them. In this sense, we can speak of a "universal fraternity".

**Responsorial psalm:** *Psalm 103:1-2, 5-6, 10, 12-14, 24, 35. R. Cf. v.30*

**R. Send forth your spirit, o Lord,  
and renew the face of the earth.**

### Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund

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Bless the Lord, my soul!  
Lord God, how great you are,  
clothed in majesty and glory,  
wrapped in light as in a robe! **R.**

You founded the earth on its base,  
to stand firm from age to age.  
You wrapped it with the ocean like a cloak:  
the waters stood higher than the mountains. **R.**

You make springs gush forth in the valleys:  
they flow in between the hills.  
On their banks dwell the birds of heaven;  
from the branches they sing their song. **R.**

From your dwelling you water the hills;  
earth drinks its fill of your gift.  
You make the grass grow for the cattle  
and the plants to serve people's needs. **R.**

How many are your works, O Lord!  
In wisdom you have made them all.  
The earth is full of your riches.  
Bless the Lord, my soul! **R.**

**Gospel reading:** *Matthew 13:1-3; 31-33*

That same day, Jesus left the house and sat by the lakeside, but such large crowds gathered round him that he got into a boat and sat there. The people all stood on the shore, and he told them many things in parables.

He put another parable before them, "The kingdom of Heaven is like a mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field. It is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the biggest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air can come and shelter in its branches."

**Leader:** The Gospel of the Lord.  
**All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

*Pause for quiet reflection*

## Prayers of intercession

**Leader:** A mustard seed; small enough to hold in the palm of your hand. Yet, Jesus tells us that this precious little seed is like the kingdom of Heaven. We ask the Lord our God to open our eyes to the wonders of creation, and we offer our hearts in hope that all things may flourish.

**Reader:** We pray for the Church: that the Holy Spirit may breathe compassion and courage into the hearts of all her people. May she walk alongside all those who are vulnerable and respond in love to their needs. Lord, in your mercy,

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**All: Hear our prayer.**

**Reader:** We pray for the world, our common home: that through God's grace we may recognise that we are all part of a fragile balance. May we hear the earth's cry, and be moved to protect it for future generations. Lord, in your mercy,

**All: Hear our prayer.**

**Reader:** We pray for world leaders, that the Lord may move them to act with respect and urgency for the sake of the earth and the most vulnerable. Lord, in your mercy,

**All: Hear our prayer.**

**Reader:** We pray for our global neighbours who are already struggling in the face of increasing droughts, floods and storms in the world. We pray for SCIAF as they reach out to help on the front-line of the climate emergency. May God grant us all hope and strength for the future. Lord, in your mercy...

**All: Hear our prayer.**

**Reader:** We pray for our parishes, schools and local communities as we work for climate justice. Through the grace of God may we choose lifestyles that do not negatively impact our vulnerable sisters, brothers or the earth. Lord, in your mercy...

**All: Hear our prayer.**

**Leader:** We ask these prayers through our Lord Jesus Christ, Redeemer of all creation,

**All: Amen.**

**Hymn:** *Seek ye first the Kingdom of God* (Laudate 820)

## Litany of creation

**Leader:** Loving God, we give you thanks and praise, for you embrace with tenderness all that exists. Let us pray:

**Reader:** Heavenly Father, source of light and life,

**All: Let all the earth praise you.**

**Reader:** Son of God, Jesus, risen in fullness,

**All: Let all the earth praise you.**

**Reader:** Holy Spirit, infinite bond of love,

**All: Let all the earth praise you.**

**Reader:** Triune God, creator of resplendent beauty,

**All: Let all the earth praise you.**

**Reader:** God of our own hearts, you draw all creatures to yourself,

**All: Let all the earth praise you.**

**Reader:** Living Lord Jesus, you open our eyes to the dignity of all,

**All: Let all the earth praise you.**

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**Reader:** Holy Spirit, you inspire us to do what is good,  
**All: Let all the earth praise you.**

**Leader:** God's bountiful love unites us as one family, and so together we dare to say:  
**All: Our Father...**

## Act of commitment

**Leader:** We think of all who dwell in the rainforests of our earth. We think of the infinite varieties of birds who sing in the trees, and the fish who swim through the waters. By opening our hearts to God's grace, we are able to cherish the goodness which surrounds us.

Now, as a sign of commitment, take some time to contemplate the beauty of creation. Please look at one of the images of nature that have been placed near to you. Contemplate the wonder of what God has made and consider what you could commit to in order to care for creation over the next 12 months. For example, walking as often as possible instead of using the car, planting a tree, picking up litter when you go out for a walk.

In this way we may take a step towards our vision of a just and green world for all.

*Quiet music plays*

## Closing prayer and final blessing

**Reader:** Lord, allow my ears to listen to the cry of the earth,  
the voices of my sisters and brothers,  
those who face the harsh reality of climate change.

**All: Lord, I come to do your will.**

**Reader:** Lord, allow my eyes to see the beauty of creation,  
in flowers, creatures, forests, and cities alike.

**All: Lord, I come to do your will.**

**Reader:** Lord, allow my voice to speak out for justice  
and ensure people living in poverty are heard.

**All: Lord, I come to do your will.**

**Reader:** Lord, allow my hands to care for the earth,  
to toil, to reap, to celebrate.

**All: Lord, I come to do your will.**

**Reader:** Lord, allow my feet to take the path less trod,  
to walk the extra mile,  
to take your message out to the world.

**All: Lord, I come to do your will.**

**Leader:** Through the blessing (+) of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, may you go forth with joy to care for creation.

**All: Amen.**

**Closing hymn:** Here I am, Lord (Laudate 865) or Be thou my vision (Laudate 970)



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